

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Amendment-B, the claims in the application are claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-20, of which claims 1, 13 and 16 are independent. Claims 1, 13, 15 and 16 have been amended. Claims 5 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice.

The above-identified Office Action has been reviewed, the references carefully considered, and the Examiner's comments carefully weighed. In view thereof, the present Amendment-B is submitted. Applicant respectfully submits that all of the above amendments are fully supported by the original application. Applicant also respectfully submits that the above amendments do not introduce any new matter into the application. It is contended that by the present amendment, all bases of rejection set forth in the Office Action have been traversed and overcome. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks Examiner Nguyen for the helpful and courteous telephonic interview he conducted with applicant's representative on April 10, 2006. During the interview, it was discussed that amending claim 1 by incorporating allowable subject matter of claim 5; and amending each of claims 13 and 16 by incorporating allowable subject matter of claim 14 would distinguish each of claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-20 over the applied references. In this amendment, applicant adopted the Examiner's suggestion as discussed during the interview, i.e., amending claims 1, 13 and 16, and canceling claims 5 and 14, to place the application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §112

In the Office Action (page 3), the Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant's Response:

Applicant discussed the rejection of claim 5 with the Examiner. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that claim 5 was rejected by error, and he withdrew his rejection of claim 5. In this amendment, applicant canceled claim 5, and incorporated the allowable subject matter thereof into claim 1.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Yoshida et al. (US 5,343,077) in view of Kleefeldt (US 5,561,420) and in further view of Perillat et al. (US 6,434,983); claim 8 is rejected under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Yoshida et al. in view of Kleefeldt and in further view of Perillat et al. as applied to claim 1, and in further in view of Tatsukawa et al. (US 6,710,700); and claim 12 is rejected under USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Yoshida et al. in view of Kleefeldt and in view of Perillat et al. and in further in view of Solow (US 5,469,135).

Applicant's Response:

Upon careful consideration and in light of the above amendments, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is overcome, and that each of claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-20 is patentably distinct over the disclosure of applied references, and given the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter of as discussed hereinafter.

For all the foregoing reasons, applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-20 under 35 USC § 103(a).

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action (page 10), the Examiner indicated that claims 5, 14 and 15 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would allowable rewritten in

independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant's Response:

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's indication of claims 5, 14 and 15 having allowable subject matter. Applicant incorporated allowable subject matter of claim 5 into claim 1; and that of claim 14 into each of claims 13 and 16.

Other Matters

In the interest of expediting prosecution of the application and to place the application in condition for allowance, applicant has amended claims 1, 13 and 16 by the present amendment.

Claim 1 has been amended to include allowable subject matter of claim 5 (canceled by the present amendment). The total combination of claim 1 is not taught, suggested nor rendered obvious by the references of record. Therefore, claim 1, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Each of claims 13 and 16 has been amended to include allowable subject matter of claim 14 (canceled by the present amendment). The total combination of each of claims 13 and 16 is not taught, suggested nor rendered obvious by the references of record. Therefore, claims 13 and 16, as amended, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 15 has been amended to depend from claim 13 (having allowable subject matter, as amended). Therefore, claim 15, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments are fully supported by the original disclosure including drawings, and that no new matter is introduced into the application by amending the claims and specification.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the above amendments are fully supported by the original application and do not introduce any new matter into the application because the amendments merely include allowable subject matter of previously presented claims 5 or 14.

Based on all of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that all of the objections and rejections set forth in the Office Action are overcome, and that as presently amended, all of the pending claims are believed to be allowable over all of the references of record, whether considered singly or in combination. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of record, and allowance of the pending claims.

Entry of the present Amendment-B is respectfully requested under 37 CFR 1.116 on the grounds that: the amendment does not raise any new issues for consideration by the Examiner, but instead merely adopts the suggestions of the Examiner outlined in the Office Action of February 23, 2006, by amending claims to include allowable subject matter and therefore, the present amendment is believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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